

October 28, 2005

Dear Friend:

Yesterday, the House of Representatives Resources' Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health held a hearing on H.R. 3817, the Valle Vidal Protection Act, which I introduced on September 15, 2005. As many of you know, the Valle Vidal is located in the heart of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico and is home to abundant populations of Rocky Mountain wildlife, including the largest heard of elk in our state. The value of this incredibly important ecological treasure lies in its wilderness and natural beauty, not in its finite supply of energy.

The Valle Vidal Protection Act would permanently protect the Valle Vidal from mineral extraction. I do not want the Valle Vidal to be opened up for drilling, and, having heard from thousands of people over the last few years, I know that New Mexicans and many other Americans are overwhelmingly against drilling in the refuge. These concerned citizens realize that the Valle Vidal's minimal contribution to our energy needs, a contribution that would not lower the high prices we are beginning to see for natural gas, is not worth despoiling such an important ecological system. The consequences are just too great. Moreover, many of my constituents, as confirmed by recent economic studies, recognize that the protection of special public lands like the Valle Vidal is good for local economies and that, in fact, exploitation of these places for a few hours of energy will hurt long-term economic growth and sustainability.

The testimony provided by the Forest Service at the hearing unfortunately leads me to believe that the Bush Administration does not agree with the over 50,000 Americans who have contacted them asking that they not open the Valle Vidal for drilling. I recommit pledge to keep representing you and fighting to protect this valuable, unique piece of New Mexico's heritage. Please click <http://www.tomudall.house.gov/issues2.cfm?id=11302> for more information about this hearing.

Very Truly Yours,

Tom Udall  
Member of Congress